

Public comment at Hayward City Council Meeting on December 2nd, 2014.

Re: Proposed Project Concept of Retail/Residential-Mixed Use Project on Mervyn's Headquarters.

From: April Yamaguchi, owner of Snappy's Café at 978 A Street.

I am troubled to see another proposal for residential/retail mixed use for the former Mervyn's site. Although the new proposal has taken into account the concerns brought up back in April when the first proposal was rejected, I strongly feel a need for a large corporation or a business park with small- and mid-sized employers to fill the space instead.

Many of my colleagues at United Merchants Downtown Hayward who are too busy and/or do not feel comfortable speaking up in public have shown their desire for more daytime foot traffic. Those who have been in downtown long enough to remember the extra customers from Mervyn's believe a large corporation or a business park with non-retail/service businesses is the key. A balanced mix of daytime customers who work in the area and event/weekend customers who live around would be a significant contribution to downtown growth.

There has been a misunderstanding that downtown merchants unanimously support additional housing. I myself do not agree with that statement, and at least one other business owner has written to the former mayor and then council members to express her disagreement in April. As many residents and business owners in the area have expressed, schools, police and other city services require strengthening before welcoming more residents.

I understand Hayward may not have enough infrastructures, such as fiber optics, to support large corporations now. My hope is the city invests in the structure and actively recruits companies to move in by offering incentives. Otherwise the old Mervyn's building remains as an eyesore while neighboring cities expand and prosper with new existing businesses. Just like businesses promote their offerings to current and potential customers, Hayward ought to broadcast what it can offer to businesses at the great location, the heart of the bay.

Thank you very much for your consideration.